PS 3509
.U8 S5
1907
Copy 1

THE SILVER CROSS

BY

JOHN·HAYS·EUWER

THE SILVER CROSS

BY

JOHN HAYS HEWER

WITH TWO DRAWINGS
BY
ARTHUR GRISP

DECORATIONS
BY
ANTHONY HENDERSON
HEWER

PS3509
.L8S5
1907

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
DEC 9 1907
Copyright Entry
Dec 7 1907
CLASS A XXc, No.
193799
COPY B.

Club Affairs Company
333 Fourth Avenue
New York

All Rights Reserved

NOTE.

The brief narrative of the introduction of Christianity into ancient Britain, by Roman missionaries, a century and a half after its invasion by the Saxons, presents a scene of solemn and pathetic interest in the history of the Saxon race.

The story, in word and incident, as embalmed in the early Chronicle, is here the same, save the light metrical garment in which it is clad.

A hundred years and fifty more
The Saxon horde roamed Briton's shore,
When, lo, the priest-garbed Roman came
With silver cross on high, aflame,
Hung with picture of that Christ
The world rejected and despised!
Not with trumpet sound, or drum—
In procession, grave, they come,
Chanting their meek litanies
With the rubric of sweet praise.
Then the High Priest,—Northumbrian he,—
Of steadfast mien and stern decree,

In presence of the nobles all
Slow spake: "The old gods down must fall!
For, these our gods, what have they done?
With voice and hand still as the stone,
Helpless they stare and mock each one!"
And bowed with shame to tell at last:
"In all the time that now was past
He knew not what he thus adored!"
The mighty priest they scarce had heard
Ere he, first among the band,
Smote the temple, lance in hand,
And laid their gods low in the sand!

* * *

Then met were in assembly grave
The King and Priests and Earls brave,
And at the High Priest's side was seen
In speech, a chief of gentle mien.
"O King, belike 'tis not forgot
In winter time our happy lot;
Nor yet a sight hath fixed thy gaze,
Though high the feasters sing thy praise;
Seated at thy royal board,
Earls and Thanes unclasp the sword,
And bearded face of son and sire
Glows beneath the broad hearth's fire;

The lofty hall is warm;
Without are rain and snow and storm;
Bright foams the mead; the Harper sings
And touches bravely his harp strings:
When tremblingly, above it all,
Darts a swallow across the hall.
By one door he comes, anon,
By another swift is gone!
Yet tho' loud the shout and din,
Pleasant to him the air within:
As if charmed each tiny feather,
He feels not rain nor wintry weather;

But, brief the moment, quick he hies,
From winter he to winter flies!
Such on earth the life of man,—
One brief moment, scarce a span.
But what the time which is before,
And what the time thro' Death's dark door?
If from this Cross a light doth gleam,
Shall show our life not all a dream;
This Cross and Christ fill they our need,
'Twere well, O King, we gave them heed!"

* * *

A thousand years and more have sped

Since the Saxon Chief thus said;
A thousand years and more of blood,
Of strife and pain hath Saxon stood;
And Saxon yet the Christ doth need,
For oft his eyes the old gods feed!
A thousand years and more have gone,
And, lo, the Cross still beckons on;
Its silver light hallows each strand,
And God's High Priests in every land
With lance of Truth shall smite amain
Earth's temples dark and idols vain!

DEC 9 19

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 906 830 4